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Coordination, programme and other questions: mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/2. It presents progress made in accountability for gender mainstreaming in the entities of the United Nations system through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and in mainstreaming gender perspectives in the operational activities of the United Nations development system.

It draws on information from 65 United Nations entities reporting under the System-wide Action Plan, the United Nations Development Group strategic summary of coordination results, the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office Information Management System and secondary sources.

Recommendations on how to support accelerated and integrated action on gender mainstreaming, in particular in the context of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, are provided for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2017.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2016/2, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed gender mainstreaming as the globally accepted strategy for achieving gender equality and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Council at its 2017 session on the implementation of that resolution, including on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The present report responds to that request.

2. The present report contains six sections. Section II, which follows the present introduction, sets out the expanding normative agenda for gender equality and the empowerment of women; section III discusses progress on the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan and contains reports on the development of the next generation of accountability frameworks; section IV provides information on progress in mainstreaming gender into operational activities at all levels; section V highlights some of the persistent gaps and challenges facing the United Nations system in systematically integrating a gender perspective into all policies and programmes; and section VI presents conclusions and provides recommendations for the consideration of the Council.

3. The report draws on data provided by 65 United Nations entities reporting under the System-wide Action Plan; the United Nations Development Group's strategic summary of coordination results (2016); the Development Operations Coordination Office Information Management System; and data from secondary sources. It features progress and results achieved in the period 2015-2016.[1]

II. Normative agenda for gender mainstreaming

4. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls remains a paramount goal of the United Nations system. Since the issuance of the Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 (see A/52/3/Rev.1, chap. IV, para. 4), the United Nations system and Member States have repeatedly reaffirmed their commitment to make women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that they benefit equally from development and gender inequality is not perpetuated. For more than 20 years, gender mainstreaming has remained the intergovernmentally agreed global strategy for achieving the goal of gender equality.[2]

5. Political commitment to and accountability for gender mainstreaming have strengthened over time in the United Nations system and among Member States. The system-wide policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women (see CEB/2006/2) provided the impetus to accelerate efforts, at the highest levels, to enhance gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of the United Nations system and in line with agreed conclusions 1997/2. Subsequently, General Assembly resolution 64/289 established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in 2010 with a mandate to, among other things, lead, coordinate and promote accountability for the work of the United Nations system on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

[1] At the time of reporting, United Nations Development Group strategic summary of coordination results reported in 2017 were as yet unavailable. The report relied on data reported by United Nations country teams in 2016.

[2] First adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, gender mainstreaming has since been reinforced in several United Nations intergovernmental resolutions, mandates and decisions.

Accordingly, in 2012, the Chief Executives Board approved the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, developed under the leadership of UN-Women, to enhance accountability for gender mainstreaming. Successive resolutions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, including resolution 71/243, adopted in 2016, have supported gender mainstreaming through the Action Plan and in operational activities.

6. The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective also plays a critical role in the implementation and success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 20). The 2030 Agenda builds on existing commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women contained in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It includes a stand-alone gender equality goal (Sustainable Development Goal 5) and integrates gender equality targets across 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

7. As one of the most comprehensive, far-reaching, intergovernmental compacts on gender equality and the empowerment of women, the 2030 Agenda, by tackling the root causes of gender inequality, offers the international community an unprecedented opportunity to drive lasting and transformative change in the lives of all women and girls and to ensure that no one is left behind.[3] United Nations system support for gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes at the global, regional and national levels is therefore essential.

8. Intergovernmental agreements in 2016 continued to acknowledge gender equality and the empowerment of women as cornerstones and as part of effective solutions to urban development, humanitarian action and the global migration and refugee crises.

9. The New Urban Agenda (see Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/22, para. 3) recognizes women as key decision makers and commits to combating the gender-specific challenges confronted by women in urban settings. It advocates for an urban planning agenda that is grounded in the values of social and political inclusion, social justice and human rights.[4]

10. The outcome document of the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May 2016, recognizes gender equality, human rights and the empowerment of women as standard principles of humanitarian planning and action. It calls for more robust gender-equality programming, increased leadership of women and girls and respect for their rights under international humanitarian law.[5] It appeals for enhanced accountability, including through zero tolerance for gender-based violence and for ensuring the right of women and adolescent girls to sexual and reproductive health care in crisis settings.[6] The Inter-Agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with Member States and civil society, contributed to the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and ensured the integration of gender perspectives.

[3] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), "Driving the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (2016), p. 5.

[4] UN-Women 2016, In brief: "Gender equality and the New Urban Agenda".

[5] Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822).

[6] Chair's summary, entitled "Standing up for humanity: committing to action", World Humanitarian Summit, Istanbul, Turkey, 23-24 May 2016.

11. At the high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held on 19 September 2016, the Global Migration Group, an inter-agency group, drew attention to gender-blind policies that overlook the priorities, voices and rights of women and girls. Member States committed to mainstream a gender perspective into their responses, including in migration policies and national laws, institutions and programmes, and to address the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by refugee and migrant women and girls (see General Assembly resolution 71/1).

III. Promoting system-wide accountability for gender mainstreaming in the entities of the United Nations system

12. In 2016, 65 entities (constituting over 90 per cent of United Nations entities) reported under the Action Plan, including the Secretariat and its departments and offices.[7] Participation in the Action Plan has increased each year: 64 entities reported in 2015, 62 in 2013 and in 2014, and 55 in 2012.

13. The 2016 results indicate that the Action Plan continues to propel progress in gender mainstreaming. For the United Nations system as a whole, the proportion of ratings meeting or exceeding requirements has more than doubled since the first year of reporting, with an increase from 31 to 64 per cent between 2012 and 2016 (see figure I). Yet, the United Nations system remains 36 percentage points away from meeting all requirements of the Action Plan by the deadline set by the Chief Executives Board of the end of 2017.

A. Comparative analysis of overall United Nations system performance, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016

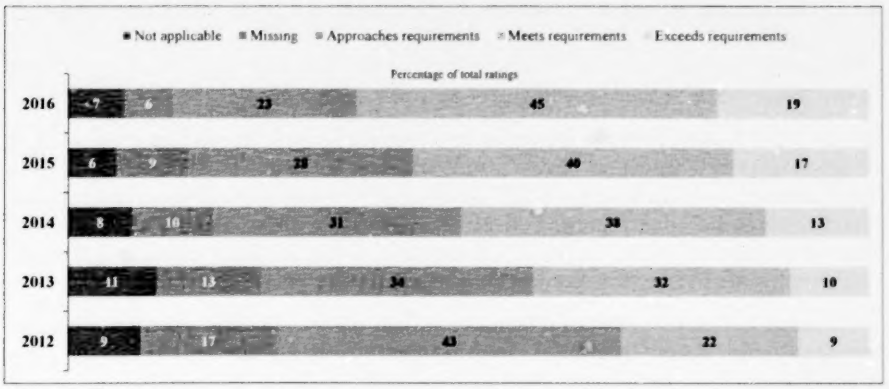
14. To gauge trends in performance, the present report compares results by (a) year, (b) performance indicator, (c) entity type[8] and (d) areas of strengths and improvement.

[7] Non-reporting entities included the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development; the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

[8] Entities were grouped into categories on the basis of the standard United Nations organizational breakdown: funds and programmes, Secretariat, specialized entities, technical entities and research and training institutes.

Figure I

Comparative analysis of overall ratings for the United Nations system, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016



Note: Calculations for the United Nations system are based on 975 individual ratings, from 65 entities reporting on 15 performance indicators.

15. Since 2012, overall system-wide performance has steadily improved (see figure I). Currently, 64 per cent of all ratings for the United Nations system fall into the "meets" or "exceeds" categories, constituting an increase of 7 percentage points as compared with 2015 and 33 percentage points as compared with 2012, representing an average annual growth of 8 percentage points.

16. Notwithstanding this average annual growth rate, however, projections indicate that at this pace the United Nations system can expect to achieve "meets" or "exceeds" ratings for all requirements only by 2020, three years after the original deadline of 2017 set by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination.[9]

17. The rate of progress has declined since 2013, when the total "meets" and "exceeds" ratings had increased by 11 percentage points as compared with the prior year. In 2016, the annual increase registered at 7 percentage points, only one percentage point higher than in 2015. Consequently, without intensified efforts over the coming year to significantly improve performance in particularly weak areas, as outlined below, the system will fall short of meeting requirements by the deadline.

B. Comparative analysis, by clusters, of entity types

18. As shown in figure II, four out of five entity types have registered aggregate improvements in their "meets" and "exceeds" ratings since 2015. Only specialized entities as a group registered a slight decline of 2 percentage points in "exceeds" ratings.[10]

19. Specialized entities nevertheless collectively registered the highest performance of all entity clusters for the fifth consecutive year. Some 80 per cent of their ratings fell into the "meets" and "exceeds" requirements categories, a 32 percentage point increase since baseline reporting in 2012.

[9] Entities with a technical focus have a deadline of 2019 for meeting the requirements.

[10] The addition of a new specialized entity in 2016 had the effect of bringing down the overall aggregate rating.

20. The funds and programmes also continued to make steady gains, with 72 per cent of their ratings falling into the "meets" or "exceeds" requirements categories in 2016, an increase of 25 percentage points since 2012.

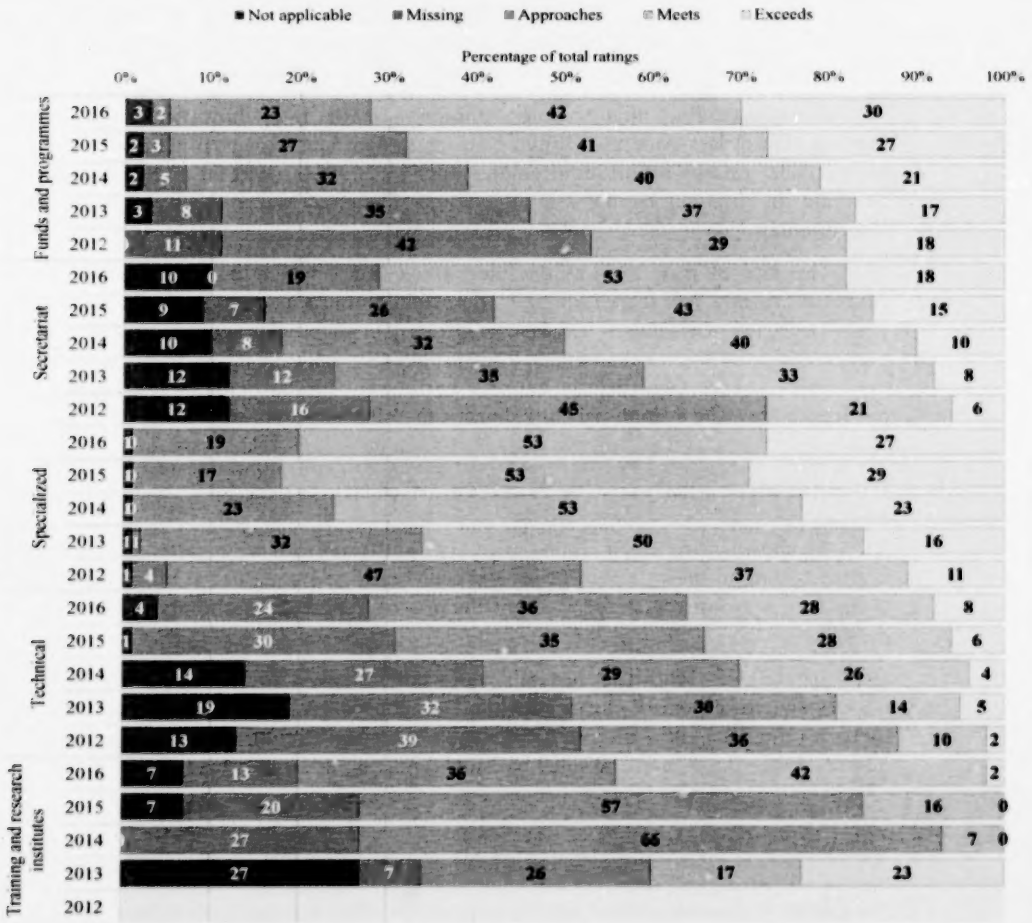
21. The Secretariat made noteworthy gains between 2015 and 2016, reporting 71 per cent of all ratings as "meets" or "exceeds" in 2016, up from 58 per cent in 2015 and 27 per cent in 2012. The Secretariat now trails the funds and programmes in the "meets" and "exceeds" categories by 1 percentage point.

22. For 2016, the cluster of entities with a technical focus reported that 36 per cent of all ratings fell into the "meets" and "exceeds" categories. This constitutes a 2 percentage point increase from the last reporting period and a 24 percentage point increase since baseline reporting in 2012. Because of their specific challenges in relation to gender mainstreaming, entities with a technical focus were accorded two additional years to meet the requirements of the Action Plan framework.

23. While not as yet ahead of others as a group, the training and research institutes registered the most significant improvement between 2015 and 2016. The proportion of their ratings that met or exceeded requirements rose 28 percentage points, from 16 per cent to 44 per cent.

Figure II

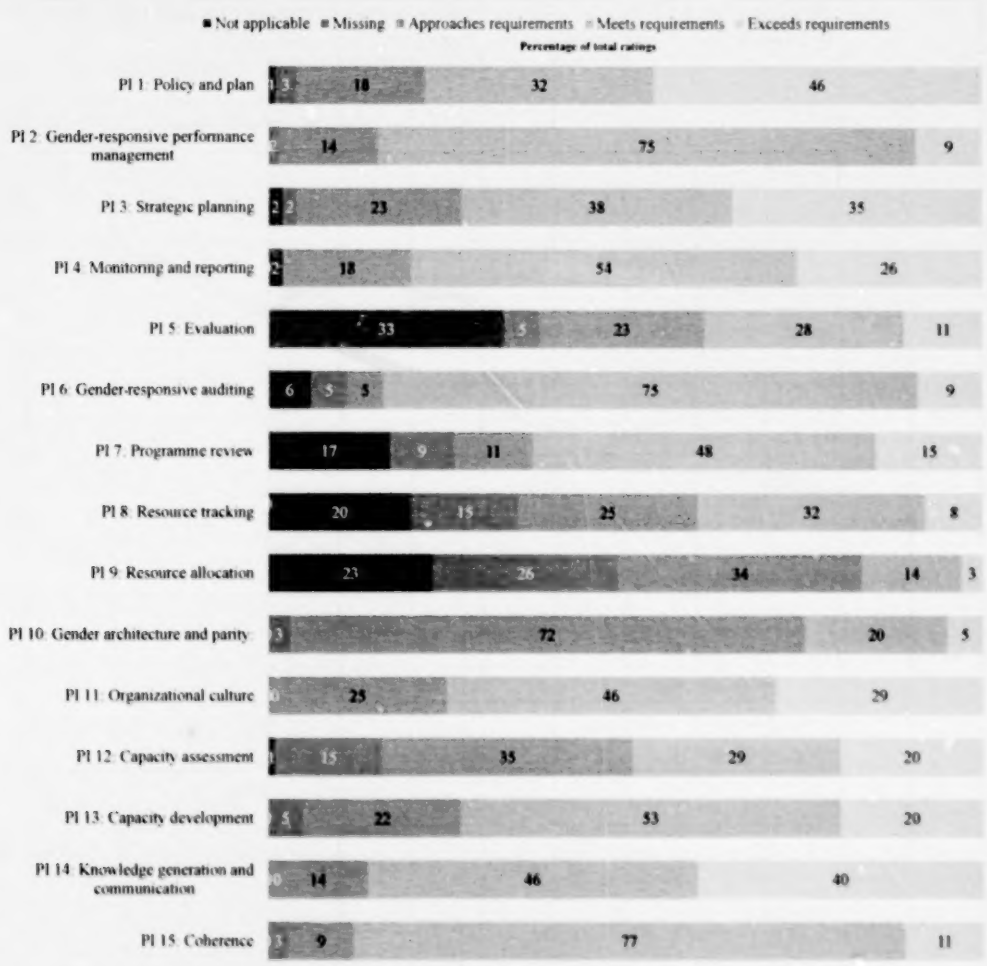
Comparative analysis of ratings, by year and entity type



C. Comparative analysis by performance indicator: strengths and areas for improvement

24. Figure III provides a breakdown of ratings for all entities by performance indicator for the current reporting period (2016). Figure IV provides a comparison of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings, by indicator, for all five reporting years.

Figure III
2016 analysis of ratings for the United Nations system, by performance indicator



25. Three indicators, namely, policy and plan, strategic planning and knowledge generation and communication, registered the largest proportion of "exceeds" ratings, with at least 35 per cent of entities[11] exceeding requirements. Performance across these indicators catalyses performance across all other indicators because of their comprehensive scope.

[11] Of the 65 entities, 30 exceeded the policy and plan indicator, 23 exceeded the strategic planning indicator, and 26 exceeded the knowledge generation indicator.

26. As with previous year's results, the indicators for resource tracking, resource allocation and capacity assessment continue to register a large proportion of "missing" ratings, reflecting a need to improve efforts. For each of the indicators, 15 per cent[12] or more of ratings were reported as "missing" requirements. Evaluation, resource allocation and resource tracking all registered 20 per cent or more of the ratings in the "not applicable" category.[13] This marks a slight increase since 2015 of 5 (from 28 per cent to 33 per cent), 3 (from 20 per cent to 23 per cent) and 3 percentage points (from 17 to 20 per cent) respectively.

Figure IV

Comparative analysis of "meets" and "exceeds" ratings by indicator and by year, ranked in descending order by 2016 performance

Performance indicator, ranked by 2016 performance	Percentage of total ratings meeting or exceeding requirements (not applicable omitted)					Percentage point difference (2016-2015)	Percentage point difference (2016-2012)
	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012		
PI 6 Gender-responsive auditing	90	83	78	69	13	7	77
PI 15 Coherence	88	89	87	89	77	-1	11
PI 14 Knowledge generation and communication	86	72	66	52	34	14	52
PI 2 Gender-responsive performance management	85	83	81	75	59	2	26
PI 4 Monitoring and reporting	81	68	65	50	39	13	42
PI 1 Policy and plan	78	73	61	50	40	5	38
PI 7 Programme review	76	63	59	47	31	13	45
PI 3 Strategic planning	75	73	74	58	41	2	34
PI 11 Organizational culture	75	69	63	59	48	6	27
PI 13 Capacity development	74	53	40	25	23	21	51
PI 5 Evaluation	58	55	50	44	36	3	22
PI 8 Resource tracking	50	39	30	25	22	11	28
PI 12 Capacity assessment	49	33	28	23	15	16	34
PI 10 Gender architecture and parity	25	22	21	20	13	3	12
PI 9 Resource allocation	22	22	18	13	7	0	15

Note: In order to present strengths and areas for improvement more accurately, percentages in figure IV were calculated omitting "not applicable" ratings. Therefore, percentages for "meets" and "exceeds" will differ slightly from those presented in figure III, which shows percentages based on all ratings, "not applicable" included.

Areas of strength: 2016 results

27. Figure IV indicates that the United Nations system registered progress for 14 of the 15 performance indicators in the fifth year of reporting.

28. The gender-responsive auditing indicator registered the best performance among all indicators for the first time since the start of the Action Plan, with 90 per cent of entities meeting or exceeding requirements. This represents an increase of 7 percentage points since 2015.

[12] Of the 65 entities, 10 reported "missing" requirements for the resource tracking indicator, 17 for the resource allocation indicator, and 10 for the capacity assessment indicator.

[13] Of the 65 entities, 22 reported "not applicable" for the evaluation indicator, 15 for the resource allocation indicator, and 13 for the resource tracking indicator.

29. Coherence, the second-best performing indicator in 2016, registered a 1 percentage point decrease. The addition in 2016 of a new reporting entity had the effect of lowering the aggregate performance for all.

30. The indicator for knowledge generation and communication registered the third-highest levels of compliance, with 86 per cent of all entities "meeting" or "exceeding" requirements, up from 72 per cent in 2015.

Progress between the previous and current reporting periods: 2015-2016

31. In the 2015-2016 reporting period, the indicators for capacity development, capacity assessment and knowledge generation and communication registered the maximum gains of 14 percentage points or higher, in the "meets" and "exceeds" ratings.

32. As in 2015, the capacity development indicator registered the greatest progress, with an impressive increase of 21 percentage points between 2015 and 2016 in the "meets" or "exceeds" categories. Currently, 74 per cent of entities[14] meet or exceed requirements. The continued uptake of the UN-Women "I know gender" e-course for non-gender specialists underlies this progress. By March 2017, 18,273 staff of reporting entities had completed the online self-paced course, an increase of 7,801 staff from the previous year. The course is mandatory for staff in 22 entities, up from 14 entities in 2015. At the current rate of progress, the United Nations system can be expected to meet the requirements of this indicator by 2018, highlighting the need to focus and accelerate efforts to meet the 2017 deadline.

Progress between baseline reporting and the current reporting period: 2012-2016

33. Since the roll-out of the Action Plan in 2012, the area of gender-responsive auditing has witnessed the most significant gains, with a 77 percentage point increase in the "meeting" and "exceeding" requirements between 2012 and 2016.[15] These results speak to the effectiveness of the Action Plan in mainstreaming gender equality considerations for the first time in the audit function.

34. The indicators for Knowledge generation and communication, Capacity development and Programme review each increased 45 percentage points or more in "meeting" and "exceeding" requirements between 2012 and 2016 (see figure IV).

35. Significantly, in 2016, 78 per cent of all reporting entities[16] met or exceeded the requirements for the gender policy indicator, an increase of 5 percentage points from 2015.[17] An additional six entities have committed to developing or implementing policies in 2017, which suggests a compliance rate of 88 per cent for all United Nations entities by the end of 2017. Gender policies and plans continue to be the strongest drivers of change. Entities with gender policies markedly outperform those without them: the 51 entities meeting or exceeding the gender policy indicator requirements in 2016, on average, met or exceeded the requirements for 11 out of 15 indicators, compared with an average of 5 indicators for entities without gender policies. Entities meeting or exceeding requirements for the policy indicator report, on average, seven times the number of "exceeds" ratings relative to the others.[18]

[14] A total of 48 entities.

[15] A total of 7 entities in 2012, compared with 55 in 2016.

[16] A total of 51 entities.

[17] A total of 47 entities.

[18] Entities meeting/exceeding the policy indicator report an average of 3.5 indicators as exceeding requirements, compared to only 0.5 for entities not meeting/exceeding the policy indicator.

36. 2016 witnessed very significant engagement in the Secretariat towards the development of a comprehensive strategy to accelerate progress towards gender parity. The strategy will encompass recruitment and selection, career development and retention and organizational culture and is expected to be finalized in 2017.

Areas for improvement

37. In keeping with past trends, Resource allocation, Gender architecture and parity, Capacity assessment and Resource tracking registered as the poorest performance areas for the United Nations system, each with 50 per cent or less of entities reporting "meeting" or "exceeding" requirements in 2016. For the fifth consecutive year, Resource allocation emerged as the weakest performing indicator, with no gains registered in the "meets" and "exceeds" category of ratings and stalling at 22 per cent. At the current rate, the system is not projected to meet requirements for this indicator until 2045, 28 years after the deadline.

38. Similarly, performance against the Gender architecture and parity indicator remains disconcertingly weak across the United Nations system: only 25 per cent of entities[19] met or exceeded requirements in 2016, registering a 3 percentage point increase between 2015 and 2016. At this rate, the system will likely reach compliance for this indicator in 2041. Encouragingly, approximately 30 per cent of entities[20] indicated Gender architecture and parity as a priority area of focus for improved performance during 2017.

39. The Gender architecture and parity indicator comprises three component parts across which progress registered unevenly, possibly explaining its weak performance:

(a) *Gender focal point systems*. This component witnessed significant progress between 2015 and 2016. A total of 95 per cent[21] of entities reported having a gender focal point system or equivalent; and 78 per cent[22] reported representation at the P-4 level and above, an increase of 12 percentage points from 2015. In addition, 76 per cent of entities[23] had established terms of reference for gender focal points, an increase of 4 percentage points from 2015. Furthermore, the percentage of entities in which gender focal points devote 20 per cent or more of their time to functions related to gender equality also increased by 19 percentage points, from 47 to 66[24] per cent respectively;

(b) *Equal representation of women at all levels*. A persistent lack of progress towards gender parity limits performance against this indicator. Echoing past results, in 2016, 83 per cent of entities[25] reported not having achieved equal representation of women at the P-4 level and above, the same percentage as in 2015;

(c) *Adequate resourcing*. Only 25 per cent[26] of entities reported having a fully resourced gender unit or the equivalent. This represents a decline of 8 percentage points from the previous reporting period, suggesting significant cause for concern.

40. While still among the worst performing Action Plan indicators, resource tracking registered encouraging progress. Of reporting entities, 40 per cent "met" or "exceeded" requirements in 2016 for the resource tracking indicator, an increase of

[19] A total of 16 entities.
[20] A total of 19 entities.
[21] A total of 62 entities.
[22] A total of 50 entities.
[23] A total of 49 entities.
[24] A total of 43 entities.
[25] A total of 54 entities.
[26] A total of 16 entities.

5 entities since 2015. The highest annual gain to date of 11 percentage points, from 39 to 50 per cent, in the "meets" or "exceeds" category, was registered between 2015 and 2016. A total of 16 entities reported working to adopt resource tracking mechanisms. "Missing" and "not applicable" ratings decreased by a total of 3 percentage points to 35 per cent between 2015 and 2016. Resource tracking constituted one of the areas most widely targeted by entities for enhancing performance: 21 entities noted it as an area of focus in 2017.

41. Capacity assessment, while still one of the poorest performance areas, registered an encouraging 16 percentage point increase in the number of entities meeting or exceeding requirements, up from 33 per cent of entities in 2015 to 49 per cent in 2016.[27] Uptake of the capacity assessment questionnaire template developed by the UN-Women Training Centre explains this progress.[28] Its even wider use, therefore, may further improve performance in this area.

D. Remedial action plans

42. The UN-Women help desk reviewed all reports for quality control and accuracy, suggesting revisions for 48 per cent of them.[29] Of these, entities accepted approximately 65 per cent, altering their ratings accordingly.

43. The quality of action plan reporting remained consistent. In 2016, as in 2015, 70 per cent of remedial action plans qualified as satisfactory or better.[30]

44. The 173 actions identified by reporting entities to improve performance in 2016 remained comparable to those for 2015, when they stood at 175. As in prior years, the weakest performing indicators, namely, resource tracking, capacity development, gender architecture and parity and the critical and catalytic indicator of policy and plan constituted the areas most targeted for enhanced activity. Additionally, in 92 per cent of cases where information was provided, staff other than the gender focal point or unit were designated as responsible for follow-up action. This reflects an increase of 12 percentage points since 2015, signalling a continued broadening of the web of engagement and responsibility for gender mainstreaming within entities beyond gender units or gender focal points.

45. Entities also estimated that a total of approximately $24.1 million (an increase of $5.3 million increase compared with 2015) would be required to meet the targets and drive system-wide performance in the last year of Action Plan reporting. In 2016, as in 2013, 2014 and 2015, the largest share of resources was required for Gender architecture and parity (24 per cent), followed by Organizational culture (14 per cent), Policy and plan (11 per cent) and Resource allocation (10 per cent).

46. Despite improved coordination, strategic planning and increased effectiveness, the United Nations system is approaching the limits of what it can achieve with the current level of resources. Without an injection of human and financial investments to fuel and sustain efforts, the overall rate of progress towards implementation of the Action Plan will stagnate or decline.

[27] A total of 32 entities.
[28] A total of 4 entities reported using the tool in 2015/2016.
[29] The United Nations Evaluation Group manages the help desk for performance indicator 5. With particular reference to evaluation, the help desk recommended revisions in 38 per cent of cases. Of those, 28 per cent resulted in altered ratings.
[30] A total of 47 entities.

E. Towards the next generation of accountability frameworks for gender mainstreaming

System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

47. In anticipation of the deadline set for 2017, UN-Women coordinated an extensive, system-wide consultative process throughout 2016 to update and prepare for the roll-out of the next System-wide Action Plan (2.0) in 2018.[31]

48. The System-wide Action Plan (2.0), which was piloted in eight entities,[32] strengthens the Action Plan by refining existing indicators and contextualizing the framework within the 2030 Agenda. It introduces three new indicators, which expand the accountability of the framework to gender-related reporting and results linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.[33] There is also a new indicator on leadership.

49. The effective implementation of the System-wide Action Plan (2.0) will require the continued leadership, advocacy and support for gender mainstreaming from the highest levels of United Nations entities. The majority of entities have indicated that high-level leadership and commitment have been foundational for the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

50. The success of the System-wide Action Plan (2.0) also rests on a sustained focus on the development, implementation and continuous updating of gender policies, which act as key levers for progress, and ensuring that comprehensive approaches and accountability mechanisms for setting and reaching gender-related goals are in place.

51. As the first five years of Action Plan implementation have shown, efforts to mainstream gender within and across entities must be well resourced in both human and financial terms. Ensuring adequate capacities to develop, measure and achieve results related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, based on system-wide results-based management methodologies, is critical.

United Nations country team level (the new scorecard)

52. To further expand and strengthen the scope of accountability at the country level, UN-Women worked with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as part of the Task Team on Gender Equality of the United Nations Development Group, to update and align the United Nations country team performance indicators on gender equality and the empowerment of women (the "scorecard") with the System-wide Action Plan (2.0) and with the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework guidance.

53. The new scorecard is contextualized within the 2030 Agenda and covers seven functional dimensions — Planning and programming, Monitoring and evaluation, Partnerships, Leadership, Gender architecture and capacities, Resources and Results — and introduces a new set of 18 performance indicators aimed at

[31] This included the administration of a survey, 2 inter-agency workshops and 20 in-person consultations. Additionally, eight entities piloted the new action plan (2.0).

[32] The Economic Commission for Africa, the International Labour Organization, the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, the International Organization for Migration, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Food Programme.

[33] These indicators include "Commitments to gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results"; "Reporting on gender-related results"; and "Programmatic results on gender equality and the empowerment of women".

strengthening the effectiveness of United Nations joint work on gender mainstreaming.

54. By using standard indicators and applying common assessment criteria, the new scorecard will allow for regional and country comparisons, as with the Action Plan. A new self-assessment methodology will also strengthen ownership by United Nations country teams and support a phased approach towards meeting performance requirements.

55. The new scorecard was piloted in six countries.[54] In keeping with global trends in the United Nations system, initial results indicate that United Nations country teams perform well in the areas of programming and partnerships, whereas areas related to monitoring and evaluation and resource tracking require improvement.

National level (adapted System-wide Action Plan 2.0)

56. Experience with the Action Plan has demonstrated the ease of its applicability to any institution, irrespective of its mandate, including those of local and national governments. In this context and in partnership with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and national women's machineries in the Arab States, UN-Women adapted the Action Plan framework to assist countries in the region to track and measure progress on gender equality and build accountability for it in public institutions. Jordan became the first country to formally notify ESCWA of its commitment to roll out the adapted Action Plan framework at the national level, where it will be tested in 2017.

IV. Mainstreaming a gender perspective in operational activities

57. Building on its predecessor and cognizant of the 2030 Agenda, which includes a stand-alone gender equality goal and upholds the principle of mainstreaming gender across other goals, resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, reaffirmed its centrality. The resolution drew particular attention to gender-responsive performance management and strategic planning, the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data, reporting and resource tracking and utilizing all gender expertise in the system, including that of UN-Women, to assist in mainstreaming gender in common programming frameworks.

58. The Chief Executives Board endorsed a set of common principles to guide the integrated support of the United Nations system in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which, among other things, acknowledges gender equality and the empowerment of women as a core principle for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It also developed a shared framework for action to address inequality and discrimination, giving additional impetus to advance gender mainstreaming across the United Nations system.

59. Accordingly, the United Nations Development Group developed guidance for the design of a new generation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The guidance acknowledges human rights and gender equality as programming principles and instructs United Nations country teams to ensure their full and consistent reflection through clearly defined, gender-specific outcomes and outputs that contribute to Sustainable Development Goal gender indicators and targets.

[54] Egypt, India, Iraq, Uganda, Ukraine and Viet Nam.

A. Leveraging common country programming for integrated responses to the 2030 Agenda

United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks

60. As a key driver of enhanced system-wide integration, coherence and coordination at country level, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks continue to demonstrate an increasing focus on gender equality. Some 90 per cent of the 27 United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks launched in 2016 feature at least one outcome level result that supports gender equality and the empowerment of women, and approximately 75 per cent drew on the findings of their respective common country assessments.[35] United Nations country teams in Zimbabwe and Malawi also developed comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategies to further guide and support the systematic integration of gender in common programming efforts.

61. The new generation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks in Armenia, Cambodia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Uruguay feature both gender-specific interventions and integrated approaches to implementing strategic sustainable development outcomes, underscoring that effective development requires multidimensional and integrated solutions.

62. The integrated support of the United Nations system can address the interrelated priorities of the 2030 Agenda. For example, advancing Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth is intrinsically linked to achieving good health and well-being (Sustainable Development Goal 3), quality education (Sustainable Development Goal 4), gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal 5) and reduced inequalities (Sustainable Development Goal 10).[36]

Joint programmes

63. Joint programmes also integrated the mandates and expertise of the United Nations system to implement globally agreed norms on gender equality and the empowerment of women in a number of areas, including agriculture, violence against women, political participation, economic empowerment, peace and security and climate change. From 2014 to 2015, the number of joint programmes on gender equality increased by 25 per cent, from 85 to 106, and represented approximately 30 per cent of the total of 365 joint programmes.[37] In 2015, joint programmes on gender equality outnumbered joint programmes in other thematic and sectoral areas, highlighting broad recognition of the role of gender equality in achieving effective development results.

64. Through climate-resilient agricultural approaches, the Joint Programme on Accelerating Progress towards the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in the context of sustainable development enhanced economic opportunities for 18,000 women in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, the Niger and Rwanda, helping to sustain their livelihoods and increasing their food security and nutrition. In Egypt, the joint programme on women's citizenship supported the Ministry of Planning in issuing 181,868 national identity cards to women, facilitating their

[35] Development Operations Coordination Office, "2016 United Nations Development Assistance Framework: desk review".

[36] United Nations Development Group, "Together possible: gearing up for the 2030 Agenda" (2016), p. 73.

[37] Ibid., p. 26.

political participation in elections as well as access to employment, health and other social services.[39]

Support for countries in meeting their international reporting obligations

65. Supporting Governments in meeting their reporting obligations to United Nations human rights mechanisms is another significant area in which the United Nations system strengthens linkages between normative and operational aspects in common programming processes. In 2015, 67 per cent of United Nations country teams supported the preparation, reporting or follow-up of universal periodic reviews, 73 per cent facilitated follow-ups to recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies, and 43 per cent facilitated engagement on special procedures.[39]

66. In Guatemala, the United Nations country team supported the preparation of State party reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. To monitor and follow up on the implementation of human rights recommendations, the Resident Coordinator's Office and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights centralized the recommendations in an online database. In Eritrea, the Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees supported the National Union of Eritrean Women in drafting the fifth periodic report of the State party to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/ERI/5), the report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.6/2015/3) (Beijing+20 report), the civil registration and vital statistics system report, as well as the second national gender action plan. These reports will be used to track national performance on gender equality commitments.

Gender theme groups

67. Ensuring adequate gender capacities of United Nations country teams is critical to mainstreaming gender in operational activities and constitutes an integral part of the accountability of the United Nations. A total of 97 inter-agency working groups on gender[40] provided important policy, technical and capacity-building support to United Nations country teams.

68. In Somalia, the gender theme group developed a gender accountability framework to support the United Nations Integrated Mission improve synergies and collaboration in the areas of leadership, advocacy, programming and reporting on gender equality. It also ensured the systematic integration of gender in the new national development plan. In Sri Lanka, the gender theme group prepared a guidance document identifying critical policy interventions for gender equality under each Sustainable Development Goal, which the United Nations country team used to support the national sustainable development council.

[39] Source: Multi-Partner Trust Fund: http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/RWF00. Participating United Nations organizations include the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization, UN-Women and the World Food Programme.

[39] United Nations Development Group, "Together possible: gearing up for the 2030 Agenda" (2016), p. 18.

[40] United Nations Development Group IMS (2016). These groups include gender theme groups, gender and human rights groups and United Nations Development Assistance Framework results groups.

69. Regional United Nations Development Group gender theme groups also stepped up efforts on gender mainstreaming, reinforcing the capacity of gender theme groups in country-level coordination mechanisms. In West and Central Africa, 38 focal points were trained on gender mainstreaming in common country programming processes, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to lead and inform inter-agency discussions on gender-equality-related priorities for the 16 United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks to be developed in 2017.

70. Regional United Nations Development Group gender theme groups in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Europe and Central Asia recommended that gender theme groups prepare gender mainstreaming strategies promoting a twin-track approach to guide the development of gender-responsive United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and common budgetary frameworks.

B. Mainstreaming gender across development, peace and security and humanitarian pillars

71. Addressing humanitarian crises and peace and security issues is vital for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Attention to gender equality in these areas, nevertheless, has been historically weak. In 2015, UN-Women implemented peace, security and humanitarian actions in 68 countries.[41] Yet, only 32 of the 116 United Nations country teams reporting on progress in these areas reported on action taken to address gender equality.[42]

Humanitarian and disaster risk reduction

72. Particular attention was given to strengthening health sector capacities and response to crises, especially in the planning and coordination of life-saving maternal health, sexual and gender-based violence and/or HIV services in countries such as Barbados, Bhutan, Ecuador and the Gambia. In Bhutan as well as in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, United Nations country teams trained health professionals and humanitarian specialists on the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health, a set of crucial, coordinated actions required to respond to reproductive health needs at the onset of every humanitarian crisis.

73. United Nations country teams also reported on continued progress to bridge the humanitarian and development divide through a focus on resilience and "building back better" approaches. Few however noted their efforts to integrate gender in these processes. In Peru, as part of humanitarian country team support to government to better monitor the El Niño phenomenon, the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNFPA and UNICEF assisted the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations to draw up a contingency planning process and to develop a strategy and plan. The United Nations country team in Swaziland supported the development of the Disaster Risk Management road map (2015-2017), which integrates gender, sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS.

Peacebuilding and peace operations

74. In the area of peacebuilding, the United Nations country team in Myanmar worked with government and civil society to mainstream gender equality and women's rights into the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the Framework for Political Dialogue. With funding from the Peacebuilding Support Office, United Nations agencies are partnering with State and regional governments,

[41] UN-Women, report to the Executive Board, 2016.

[42] United Nations Development Group strategic summary of coordination results, 2016.

community-based organizations and women and youth networks to build a State responsive to its citizens and to empower women and youth as critical actors and partners of peace. In Uganda, UNDP and UN-Women supported regional consultative meetings that ensured the inclusion of gender and youth issues in the national Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation Policy development process.

75. 2015 and 2016 also saw significant strengthening of the gender architecture of peace operations. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations added a Military Gender Adviser at headquarters and placed military gender advisers in several missions to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in the documentation prepared by the Military Planning Service.[43] Senior advisers now lead the gender units of all eight multidimensional peacekeeping missions, and all eight traditional peacekeeping missions include gender focal points.[44]

76. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission adopted a gender strategy, becoming the first intergovernmental body to do so.[45] The strategy is expected to support the Commission's strengthened engagement on gender-related aspects of peacebuilding to ensure that women's and girl's agency and voice form a critical component of effective peacebuilding efforts.

C. Making women and girls count

77. The availability and production of high quality, accessible, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other variables remain critical for enhancing gender mainstreaming efforts at all levels and for assessing progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women, especially in the context of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Currently, however, nearly 80 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators for gender equality either lack data or do not have accepted standards for measurement,[46] which presents significant challenges to national statistical systems in many countries.

78. Strategic technical support for national statistical systems in countries such as Albania, Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador and Georgia ensured gender mainstreaming in the production, analysis and dissemination of data and increased the availability of gender statistics for national and international monitoring. At the request of the Government of El Salvador, the United Nations country team supported the establishment of a General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses, which includes a Gender Management Unit and a Gender Observatory to produce gender statistics. In Georgia, UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women drafted a proposal advising the Government on the integration of Sustainable Development Goal 5 indicators and targets into national plans, which were subsequently adopted.

79. The Caribbean Community Secretariat was also supported in developing and endorsing a set of gender equality indicators consistent with the minimum set of gender indicators. The indicators are being piloted in Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica and Suriname in order to monitor the implementation of gender equality commitments in the 2030 Agenda.

[43] See the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822), para. 25.
[44] Ibid., para. 83.
[45] Ibid., para. 46.
[46] UN-Women Flagship Programme brief, "Better gender statistics for evidence-based localization of the Sustainable Development Goals", May 2016.

80. To close critical gender data gaps, the UN-Women flagship programme, Making Every Women and Girl Count (2016-2020)[47] seeks to enhance policies and practices governing the development of gender data and statistics in partnership with Governments, in particular national statistical offices, regional commissions, international agencies, private foundations, civil society organizations and academic institutions.

V. Gaps and challenges

81. The United Nations system continues to make progress in achieving greater system-wide coherence on and accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women. The pace of progress, however, remains slow, uneven and inadequate if the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda are to be met, especially with respect to the stand-alone goal on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Sustainable Development Goal 5) and other gender-related goals and targets.

82. Gender mainstreaming efforts at the institutional and operational levels continue to lack sufficient human and financial resources needed for effective coordination and integrated joint action among and between gender units, including gender theme groups at the regional and country levels. The absence of a system-wide, harmonized gender marker to track financial allocations and expenditures for gender equality limits the ability of the United Nations system to identify resource gaps and commit to specific targets. As previously noted, 75 per cent of entities reported being significantly underresourced relative to their mandates to propel progress as measured by the System-wide Action Plan.

83. At the United Nations country team level, many United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks continue to reflect a sub-optimal understanding of gender equality challenges, rights-based approaches or sex-disaggregated data necessary for addressing underlying causes of inequality and discrimination. Further, few evidence the adoption of a twin-track approach to gender mainstreaming that includes a targeted gender outcome as well as integrates gender perspectives across other outcome areas.

84. Similarly, humanitarian and peacebuilding responses do not consistently reflect comprehensive knowledge of the gender impacts of crises, or adequately engage women's and girls' leadership and participation in shaping solutions at the local and international levels.[48] Long-term social transformations supporting women's human rights, the empowerment of women and their equal participation in political, economic and social development cannot be achieved without addressing these shortcomings.

85. Limited national data disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, disability and other intersecting factors also constrains the ability of the United Nations system to adequately develop evidence-informed policies and programmes that address inequalities as well as to review and follow up progress on gender equality targets and goals in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

[47] This global initiative is supported by the governments of Australia, Ireland and the United States, as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

[48] See the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2016/822), para. 19.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

86. For 20 years,[49] United Nations entities have used gender mainstreaming to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women. Through it, gender perspectives have been progressively integrated into organizational functions, such as planning and policy development, research, advocacy, legislation, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation. Member States have consistently renewed and reaffirmed the mandate on gender mainstreaming in intergovernmental agreements, and gave it even greater purpose and momentum in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

87. Accordingly, gender mainstreaming, as a strategy, will continue to support the United Nations system and Member States to realize and prioritize gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all its dimensions: within institutions, within sectors, as well as in development and humanitarian plans and strategies. Its effective implementation can remedy chronic under-investment and leverage change in and across multiple areas for women and girls.

88. Working in and across the United Nations pillars of development, peace and security and humanitarian action provides additional entry points for gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes.

89. The important progress made on the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women reflects the commitment of United Nations entities to gender mainstreaming and the willingness to hold themselves and the United Nations system, as a whole, accountable for demonstrating improved performance. The next generation of accountability frameworks to be rolled out in 2018 will consolidate and deepen these gains.

90. United Nations country teams and gender theme groups continue to drive the work on gender mainstreaming and gender equality through common country programming processes. The preparation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and other joint programmes remain strategic entry points for gender mainstreaming and delivering gender equality results through coordinated and integrated approaches. UN-Women, in countries where it has a programme presence, plays a major role in guiding the United Nations development system in this respect.

91. In view of the above, the Economic and Social Council may wish to request the United Nations system, including the specialized agencies and funds and programmes, to:

(a) Accelerate gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes and in support of the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global, regional and country levels;

(b) Redouble efforts to meet and report on the requirements of the System-wide Action Plan in its final year of implementation;

(c) Implement the roll-out, beginning in 2018, of the new System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (System-wide Action Plan 2.0), which, among other things, contextualizes gender mainstreaming and accountability for it in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and initiates reporting on results;[50]

[49] Economic and Social Council Agreed Conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.

[50] This is consistent with the decision of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (CEB/2006/2).

(d) Implement the roll-out, beginning in 2018, of the new United Nations country team accountability framework, the Action Plan-aligned United Nations country team scorecard;

(e) Strengthen networks of collaboration and coordination among gender specialists and gender focal points to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming across the United Nations pillars of development, peace and security and humanitarian affairs and in joint work and integrated planning processes;

(f) Intensify focus, preferably through the adoption of a comprehensive strategy, on the equal representation of women, including through the systematic application of temporary special measures, as mandated under article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and through the setting and monitoring of quantitative targets for women's representation and increased accountability of senior management;

(g) Harmonize gender marker systems to assist the United Nations system to set and meet financial benchmarks and to understand resource deficits for gender equality and the empowerment of women, also in the context of United Nations Development Assistance Framework common budgetary frameworks;

(h) Invest adequate financial and human resources for gender mainstreaming commensurate with stated corporate commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women and with the gender equality ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, including mandatory training for all staff on gender equality and the empowerment of women, including gender mainstreaming and analysis;

(i) Ensure that United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, or their equivalents, reflect a twin-track approach to gender mainstreaming through a dedicated gender equality outcome as well as the integration of gender equality across all other Sustainable Development Goal-related outcome areas;

(j) Ensure that country level coordination mechanisms, including gender theme groups or their equivalents, are fully empowered through clear mandates, capacity and resources to provide strategic support and advice to United Nations country teams in enhancing their gender mainstreaming efforts;

(k) Ensure that the United Nations Development Group continues to guide and support United Nations country teams on mainstreaming gender in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, and that all regional United Nations Development Groups develop and maintain dedicated expertise on gender mainstreaming and provide integrated and coherent support to United Nations country teams;

(l) Support, at the request of Member States, the adaptation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to promote gender mainstreaming and accountability in national institutions, including those corresponding to sectors linked to the Sustainable Development Goals;

(m) Strengthen, at the request of Member States, national statistical capacity for the production of gender statistics and data, disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors, through increased technical and financial assistance as well as through greater collaboration across all sectors towards the production, analysis and use of quality gender statistics;

(n) Report on progress on all of the above at the 2018 session of the Economic and Social Council.